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### PRESS RELEASE

# DCR Developing Design for Draw Seven Park in Somerville

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**SOMERVILLE** — In an effort to restore natural open space, improve and create trail connections, and increase climate resiliency, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is currently developing the schematic design for Draw Seven Park within the Mystic River State Reservation. Once complete, the project will connect ten miles of continuous parkland along the Mystic River. The agency anticipates construction to potentially begin in fall 2020, with a completion date expected in 2022.

“The Baker-Polito Administration continues to prioritize environmental initiatives, such as access to natural resources and climate resiliency, throughout the Commonwealth to encourage outdoor recreational opportunities, alternative transportation, and ecological sustainability,” **said Department of Conservation and Recreation Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery**. “In an effort to protect and promote local infrastructure, the DCR is partnering with the City of Somerville, the Mystic River Watershed Association, and other key stakeholders to advance the Draw Seven Park redesign project, and once complete community residents and people living within the region will greatly benefit from this incredible asset.”

“We are excited to work with DCR on renovations to Draw Seven Park that will both encourage residents to visit and improve our natural environment,” **said Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone**. “When this project is done, Draw Seven Park will help connect more Somerville residents with the Mystic River and allow them to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.”

The design elements of the Draw Seven Park project includes:

- The protection of upland areas against storm surges and rising sea levels by elevating the grades;

- The installation of a “living shoreline” with the restoration of salt marshes and shellfish habitat;
- The restoration of fresh water wetlands;
- The installation of green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality;
- The upgrading of the Amelia Earhart Dam utilities and flood protection;
- The reconstruction of a shared-use river path;
- The construction of new trails with scenic overlooks;
- The installation of new interpretive signage featuring site history and area ecology;
- The development of new park activity areas, such as gathering areas with trees, seating, and lawn areas for recreation; and,
- The installation of new native plants and landscaping.

“The planned renovation of Draw Seven Park along the banks of the Mystic River is great news for Somerville and everyone who enjoys our neighborhood parks and natural resources,” **said State Senator Patricia Jehlen (D-Somerville)**. “I look forward to seeing the return of a beautiful green space that contributes to our resiliency against flooding, restores additional access to recreation, and enhances the connection to the natural resources around us.”

“I am delighted with today’s announcement that the Commonwealth is moving forward with plans for improvements to Draw 7 Park, including a living shoreline, stormwater management, upgrades to the Amelia Earhart Dam, and a shared-use river path,” **said State Representative Michael Connolly (D-Cambridge)**. “I am particularly grateful to all of the Somerville residents who spoke up and made their voices heard in this process, as this announcement reflects the thoughtful input of our community. I look forward to working with DCR, the City of Somerville, the Mystic River Watershed Association, local residents and all concerned stakeholders to see this project through to fruition.”

Importantly, DCR has conducted community outreach to gather public input regarding the redesign of Draw Seven Park. In February 2018, the agency utilized a park-use survey and constituent interviews, as well as a public meeting in East Somerville. Once the designs reach 25% completion, potentially in spring 2020, DCR will host an additional public meeting to present the most up to date plans. A cost associated with the construction has not been determined at this time, and funding has not been identified yet.

“The Draw 7 Park represents a great opportunity to expand our open space, support green space, and combat climate change,” **said Matt McLaughlin, Somerville Ward 1 City Councilor.** “I am grateful for Mayor Curtatone and State Rep. Mike Connolly for their advocacy on this little known yet significant open space.”

The 9-acre Draw Seven Park is part of the Mystic River State Reservation, a 329-acre park system that includes riverfront parklands stretching from the Town of Winchester to the City of Chelsea. The park is a flood pathway for coastal storm surge, making Draw Seven Park critical for the climate change resiliency of the surrounding communities. Furthermore, the Mystic River is rich with ecological diversity seeing approximately 600,000 alewife and blueback herring migrate through its waters to spawn in the Mystic Lakes.

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## Department of Conservation & Recreation

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DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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